Newsletter

March 1981 # 23

Blissymbolics
Communication
Institute

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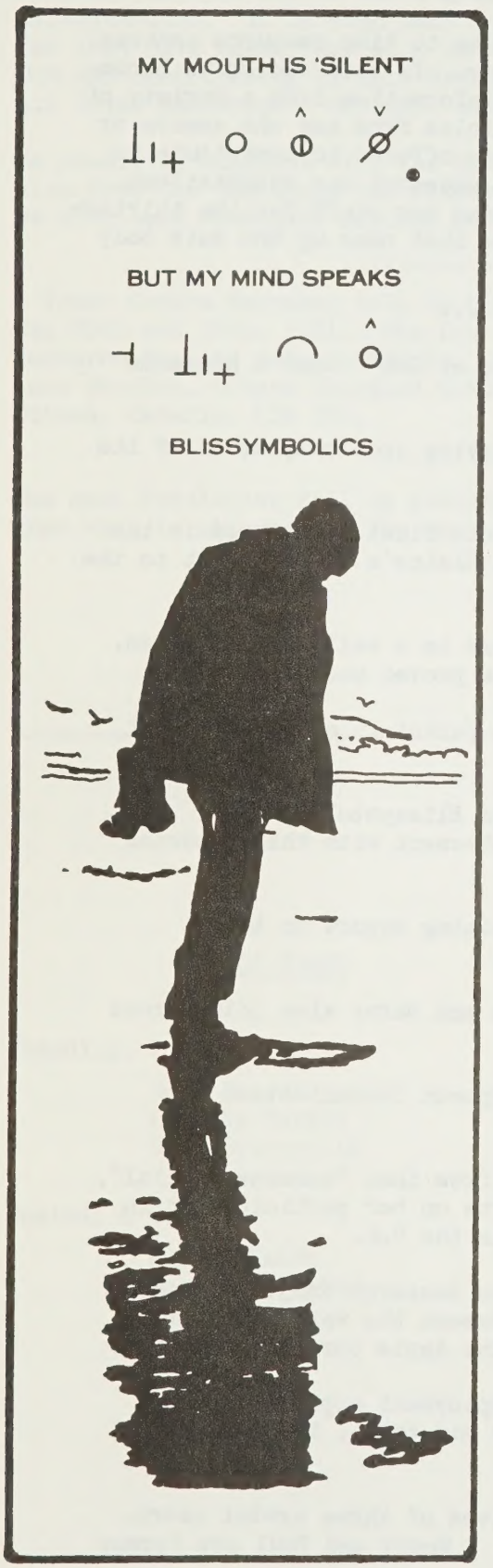

"THE BREAKTHROUGH"

BLISSYMBOLICS COMMUNICATION INSTITUTE

Newsletter:
Available through associate membership in BCI. $25.00 per annum. Apply to:

Blissymbolics Communication Institute
350 Rumsey Road
Toronto, Ontario
Canada, M4G 1R8

Articles:
Readers are encouraged to contribute letters and articles in order to share their symbol experiences. Write to:

BCI Newsletter
Mrs. Barbara Rush, Editor
64 Magnolia Drive
Hamilton, Ontario
Canada, L9C 5T2

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FROM THE EDITOR

Most of our readers will be aware that from time to time resource centres volunteer to gather material for the Newsletter. In this manner we become acquainted with regional happenings and gain information from a variety of sources. We usually receive four to six articles from any one centre or group. The Blissymbolics Communication Service offered to contribute to the March edition and their efforts have well exceeded our expectations. Grateful thanks are extended to Penny Parnes and her staff for the thirteen informative, interesting and humorous articles that make up the main body of this issue.

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We begin with an introduction to staff members of BCS - what a handsome bunch!

Penny Parnes then provides a review of the Service upon completion of its first year.

Elaine is a symbol user to whom our readers were first introduced in the Fall 78 Newsletter. Marny Loach writes about Elaine's recent visit to the Service.

Expansion of symbol displays for advanced users is a well-known problem. Barbara Collier offers one suggestion that has proved successful.

Betty Miles provides the special insight of a parent in a discussion of her son's experiences with Blissymbolics.

To many of us the names Shirley McNaughton and Blissymbolics are synonymous. Lynette Norris explains her involvement with this "special someone".

Lynette and Penny combine to offer an entertaining report on their workshop experiences.

Other staff members, Nora Rothschild, Barbara and Marny also join forces to report on the BCS evaluation kit.

We hear from Penny again concerning the Non-Speech Communication Conference held in Toronto last November.

It is always a delight to receive an article from that "someone special", Shirley McNaughton. This time Shirley reports on her participation in an Alternative Communication Systems Course in the U.K.

Ann Colquhoun is involved with the Conn Smythe Research Project at the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre. She discusses the work in progress on the Blissymbol printer and terminal, and the Apple personal computer.

We are happy to include information on two employment opportunities in Victoria, B.C. Since resumes are required by mid-March, it is essential that you telephone immediately if interested.

"The Breakthrough" is a new film about the lives of three symbol users, Wendy Ferguson, Paul Marshall and Sue O'Dell. Wendy and Paul are former

students of mine and it was a great privilege to introduce them to Blissymbolics. It is even more satisfying to view the film and see how far they have come. Sue is a very special lady too, now working for the BCS and contributing to this Newsletter. The film should be a "must" for all Bliss Workshops - Shirley, take note!!

As usual, we conclude with the Symbol Users' Corner. The first offering is also from the BCS since the author, Sue Odell, is now a part-time staff member. We also hear from Dick Taschuk of Calgary with his request for a correspondent.

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A Trace Centre Workshop will be held at the Skyline Hotel, Ottawa, Ontario, May 29th and 30th, 1981. The fee is $135 and the instructors are Gregg Vanderheiden and Deberah Harris. For further information contact: Anne Warrick, Ottawa Crippled Children's Treatment Centre, P.O. Box 8469, Ottawa, Ontario, K1G 3H9.

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The next Newsletter will be published in July 1981. Do write and let us know what is going on in the non-verbal corners of your world.

Barbara Rush
Editor

BCS STAFF

Standing, L to R

Ruta Rosset
Lynette Norris
Nora Rothschild

Seated, L to R

Marney Loach
Barbara Collier
Penny Parnes

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE BCS STAFF

For many of you, it's an opportunity to put a face to a name.

Penny Parnes: Director, BCS. In October, 1980, Penny became the Director of the Service when Shirley McNaughton moved to her new position as Director of Professional Services with BCI. Although Shirley is sadly missed, Penny is a competent successor. Penny's background is in speech pathology. She has been a consultant with the Service since its conception in 1979 and is well known to many as a Senior Presentor in Blissymbolics.

Lynnette Norris: Lynnette is also a veteran of the Service as a consultant and as a Senior Presentor. Lynnette's background is in special education and she is involved with out-patient care and the out-reach client programmes. She is also involved in facilitator training sessions and she just about makes it home for supper in the evenings!

Nora Rothschild: Nora is a speech pathologist who has been with the Service as a consultant and as an Associate Presentor since 1979. She has a wealth of symbol experience which goes back to her days at Simcoe Hall Crippled Children's Centre, Oshawa (Penny's old stomping grounds also). Nora is presently involved with OCCC school program and with facilitator training sessions. She never fails to surprise and impress us with her creativity when it comes to designing symbol displays

Barbara Collier: Barbara is a speech pathologist who came by way of Newfoundland from Ireland. She joined the team as an instructor in September, 1980 and as a consultant in January, 1981. Barbara works with the in-patients at OCCC. She welcomes the opportunity to inform people that - yes, there are two speech pathologists by that name in Toronto!!

Marney Loach: Marney is a Blissymbol Instructor who's background is in nursing and teaching. She coordinates our volunteer workers, a major task which she does so well and she also implements symbol programmes in the classroom and on a one to one basis.

Ruta Rosset: If there's anything new or strange going on within the Service, Ruta, the BCS secretary, knows of it. Ruta organizes, types, files and does just about everything to keep the show going.

Sue Odell: Sue works for the Service on a part-time basis. She is involved with our new Apple computer and in demonstrating symbol use to the many visitors who come to the Service.

We cannot begin to mention all the volunteers and aids who help us to keep the service going. They are wonderful people who give their time to do the many things that we need assistance with - from making up displays to adapting our toys and materials for symbol use. We take this opportunity to thank them all.

THE BLISSYMBOLICS COMMUNICATION SERVICE
OUR FIRST YEAR IN REVIEW

Penny Parnes
Director
Blissymbolics Communication Service

The Blissymbolics Communication Service (BCS) has functioned since October, 1979 as a service programme within the range of services provided by the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre.

Its general purpose, as outlined in the original proposal, has been
- to develop, implement and evaluate a Service which provides support to the usage by persons who lack functional speech, of a particular augmentative communication system - Blissymbolics;
- through the procedures developed, to offer a model for the support in Ontario of the application of augmentative communication systems in general - considering both the organizational and financial aspects of this support.

The first year of the BCS has been a busy and productive one. Much time and energy has been directed to establishing policy and procedures, to organizing space and equipment, and to clarifying roles and responsibilities.

Although the numbers of persons to be served during the first year were projected as:
- 25 students would receive service in the form of initial assessment and instruction, follow-up, or up-dating; = 25 persons
- Parents and family, or spouse and family (in the case of adults) would attend instructional sessions or meeting(s); 25 x 2 = 50 persons
- Instructors, either professional or volunteer, would receive training; = 25 persons.

Total = 100 persons

The actual number of students totalled 91. When calculating training of instructors, family, etc., the actual number of people served by the BCS was approximately 350.

These statistics result from the BCS policy of disseminating information regarding BCS to medical, educational and clinical facilities throughout the province and responding to need as indicated by referrals.

The BCS has dealt with clients in a wide variety of circumstances. Clients have been seen on both an inpatient and outpatient basis. The ages of clients have ranged from 3 to 72 years. Although most clients have been residents of Ontario, referrals have also come from outside of Ontario and one child was admitted from Mexico City, Mexico. The services provided have also been very diverse and have included:
- construction and updating of symbol displays
- assessment for most appropriate teaching techniques
- training of parents and teachers to carry on home programming
- demonstration teaching in the classroom
- participation in pre-vocational assessment

- in-services and presentations to aid integration into the community
- pre-reading and reading instruction through Blissymbols
- consultation to school and hospital programs at O.C.C.C.

The BCS has undertaken numerous activities in support of the Blissymbol user in the community, at home and in his academic setting. These services have included:

- school visits
- home visits
- inservice presentations to: O.S.C.C. District Nurses, medical residents at O.C.C.C., speech pathology departments in major hospitals, special education teachers, etc.

Various support materials have been developed to assist in initial and ongoing assessment of symbol users. These have included materials to assess physical, symbolic and perceptual skills.

The lack of readily available instructional materials for use with Blissymbol users has been an ongoing concern for the BCS. Instructional materials are required both for direct client interaction and for demonstration purposes with facilitators and other professionals in the field. To this end, BCS has made use of student and volunteer support available under the direction of a consultant. Numerous available materials have been adapted including puzzles, books and toys. In addition, original designs have been used for development of teaching aides. Liaison with the Biofeedback Department has resulted in the availability of two adapted toys for use in early training of electronic control of a device.

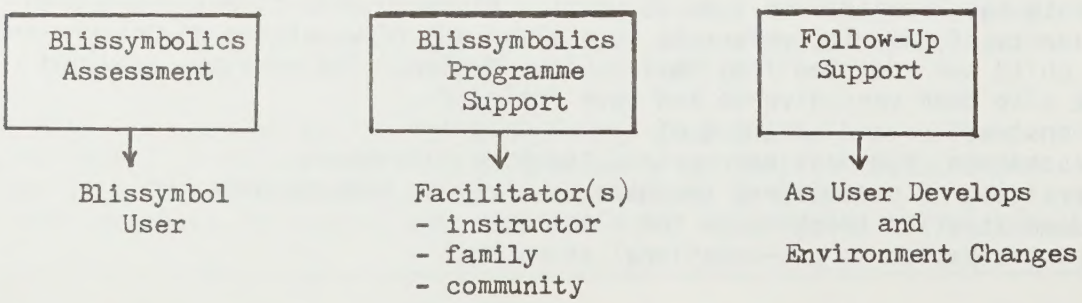
Follow-up procedures have generally been instituted through the use of ongoing telephone and mail contacts. Facilitators, schools, etc. are encouraged to call immediately should any problems arise.

Included within the BCS's responsibilities, up to November 1, 1980, has been the research project funded by the Conn Smythe Research Foundation, entitled "The Evaluation of the Blissymbol Printer, the Blissymbol Terminal and the Apple Personal Computer".

It is recognized that Blissymbolics is only one of several currently available augmentatives to speech. An effort to provide assistance to users of other systems in the province should be investigated. It is hoped that O.C.C.C. will be able to provide such an expanded service in the near future.

ONTARIO CRIPPLED CHILDREN'S CENTRE

BLISSYMBOLICS COMMUNICATION SERVICE



A SPECIAL BLISSYMBOL USER

Marny Loach
Instructor,
Blissymbolics Communication Service

BCS and BCI will never be the same. We were touched by a Happening - a visitor from Newfoundland who ran us through all the emotions of parenthood - worry, relief, laughter, tears and love. Elaine is a nineteen year old student who came to us for upgrading of her education and vocational assessment. Although she did not find it easy to make the transition from Newfoundland to Toronto, she was always ready with a joke or pun or an astute take-off of the people here. Throughout her 4-month stay, Elaine's laughter could be heard throughout the halls of OCCC and in the cafeteria. Like the mummers of Newfoundland, she found that Halloween was her Day - as she surprised us all by dressing up as her friend, Shirley McNaughton (who was in Wales at the time). The rest of us did not escape - as her keen sense of mimicry zeroed in on many of our gestures.

Elaine is now one of the most fluent Blissymbol users. A few years ago, she could not express her pent-up feelings at all. When one of our visitors from Australia asked her what she did before she used "Bliss", she replied "Cry and fight!" She is now able to work through many of her problems by discussing them calmly with others.

Elaine's stay at the Centre was a great learning experience for her - and for us. We know that wherever her life takes her, she will be better able to adjust, physically and emotionally helped by her stay here. Our teenager has grown up.

The gathering of the staff from BCS and BCI at Elaine's "party" was the social event of the season. Elaine helped prepare all the food for our "Super Supper" and gave the most stirring Blissymbolics speech of all time that began, "On this special night, I want to thank . . .". Our hearts are with this very special person. We love her and we miss her.

"EXPANDING A SYMBOL DISPLAY SURFACE"

Barbara Collier
Consultant
Blissymbolics Communication Service

"Are there 4,000 symbols?" David asked me jokingly. And I knew what was on his mind. Thank goodness that there are not that many for if there were, David would want them all!

The problem of expanding a symbol vocabulary is not an easy one, as David and I discovered when we set about to expand his 400 symbol vocabulary. What we finally came up with may be of interest to you.

As you can see, we used the flat surface of his tray to arrange his symbols and to leave some space for additional vocabulary. We used an index filing system to expand this. Each page contains 35 symbols and the four pages give him 280 spaces for symbols. New pages can be inserted later on when the need arises and when David's ability to turn the pages improves. The whole system is mounted on ¼" lexan to facilitate easy turning of the extended lower corners of the pages which are reinforced with strips of lexan. As David has another wheelchair and another symbol tray for that wheelchair, we used velcro to attach the index system which can be easily transferred from one chair to another.

The first page of the index contains the alphabet and numbers and this arrangement is repeated on his tray, so that when it is removed, David can still use the alphabet. The other pages contain symbols and classification of symbols that David does not use too frequently. In addition, he has specific pages on mathematical concepts, sports and family vocabulary.

We are pleased with the result and we hope we have given you some ideas.

"HIS TIME HAS COME"

Betty Mills

As my husband and I sat watching our 20 year old son enjoying his Christmas Dance and Party in December of 1980, we couldn't help but remember how many tears of frustration we had shed in trying to get help for him through the years. Being labeled "Cerebral Palsied and Mentally Retarded" he had been institutionalized for most of his twenty years. We had always felt that he could learn and be stimulated but the big question was where and how to get him into almost non-existant programs where he could get the help he so badly needed.

We had never heard of Bliss, in fact when we first came upon the name we had to ask someone what it stood for. Nedless to say when we did find out I called the Bliss Institute that very same day to get information as to whether or not our son might be eligible to be seen at the Blissymbolics Communication Service.

It was arranged that Steven would be seen at the Service but in the meantime the people at Bliss sent us all the literature, pamphlets, etc., explaining the program to us. Armed with these valuable papers we set out to try and teach Steven some of the symbols on our own. As he was a patient in a Home for Special Care we could only teach him when we went to visit or had him home for a day here and there. Our "Bliss Board" was a sight to behold (Lynnette Norris has it at the Bliss office to show people how we set about teaching our son). The "Board" consisted of a series of hand drawn symbols on coloured envelope, scotch taped to a piece of cardboard box. With this very rough teaching tool we set out to set the world on fire. By the time Steven was seen at the Service some 6 weeks later we had managed to teach him over 40 symbols. We had been so used to having Steven turned down because of his handicaps that we were going to Bliss and show them that he could indeed learn. We really didn't have to do too much convincing. With the series of tests given to Steven the people at Bliss were as excited as we were and felt there were definite possibilities for him. We felt like he was finally on his way.

When Steven was accepted into the program we felt like a miracle had happened. This was the first positive action we had been able to achieve for him after a very long struggle.

He's going great guns now thanks to the time and dedication by all the people who have worked with him over the past year. What a delight to be able to communicate with him after so many years.

His life has changed so dramatically over the past year and we think it is largely due to his success with Bliss. Through the Bliss people he was seen by doctors and therapists at the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre and is now the proud owner of his first wheelchair. Follow-up is being done at the Centre's seating clinic. He is now out of the Nursing Home and into a new government project called Participation House Apartment project and is sharing a two bedroom apartment with another handicapped young man. He attends a life skills program on a daily basis and is learning, although slowly, how to help take care of himself and to participate in all he can. He is so enjoying the fact that he has his own apartment and can entertain his friends, go shopping, go to concerts, etc.things that you and I take so for granted.

In the life skills program they recently started him on a new system based on a reward system. When they asked him what he wanted as a reward he let them know in no uncertain terms that he wanted more Bliss symbols. Would you believe he added 19 new symbols in a one week period.

My husband and I agreed to tell our story through this Newsletter in the hope that any parent with a handicapped person in their family would maybe find Steven's story encouraging and helpful. Please, get in touch with Blissymbolics Communication Service, they are fine people who are most interested and helpful in any way that they can be. Nothing is too much trouble for these people.

We are waiting for the day when Steven can tell us through Bliss just what thoughts have been locked up inside him for all these years, but for now when he points to "I LOVE YOU" and "FAMILY", this is more than enough.

"SOMEONE SPECIAL"

Lynnette Norris
Consultant
Blissymbolics Communication Service

The last five and a half years for me have been the most exciting years in my professional career. It was five and a half years ago that I was introduced to Blissymbolics and Shirley McNaughton at the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre. Imagine not having heard the word Blissymbolics or the name Shirley McNaughton and becoming acquainted with both of them on the same day. The impact was tremendous!

I learned first hand, from observing Shirley, the skills that I now bring to the communication assessment team at the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre. I learned and grew through her example and tuition, to present at Blissymbolics Communication Institute's Elementary Workshops. I became excited and challenged by her, in helping to develop the current elementary curriculum for the workshop sessions. My interest in, and search for knowledge about non-speech communication was sparked by Shirley and my present position as Blissymbolics Consultant at the Blissymbolics Communication Service was created by Shirley McNaughton. To say that my present professional attitudes and philosophies have been inspired by Shirley would be an understatement!

Shirley is unique. I have never been acquainted with someone who has the energy, the drive, the sensitivity and the thirst for knowledge that she has. For the last four years in Blissymbolics I have been directly responsible professionally to Shirley McNaughton - as a presentor for the Institute and as a consultant for the Blissymbolics Communication Service of which Shirley has been the Director. Throughout the years that I have known Shirley, my admiration for her as a professional has grown as has my liking of her as a person.

Shirley resigned from her position as Director of The Blissymbolics Communication Service in October of 1980 and accepted the new position of Director of Professional Services for the Blissymbolics Communication Institute. We at the Blissymbolics Communication Service thank Shirley for the energy, the knowledge and the perseverence that she demonstrated in meeting the challenges required of it's first director. We know she will meet new challenges in her job as Director of Professional Services at BCI and we also know that she will handle these challenges in the very capable, professional and exciting manner that she has always met each new challenge with. We wish her good luck and continued friendship.

When Shirley left the Service in October, she left knowing that she had given it a good first year's start and that she had trained a team who were capable of carrying on its worthwhile work. The new Director of the Blissymbolics Communication Service is Penny Parnes who, like Shirley, is able to motivate her staff to not only accept new challenges but to seek out new challenges. Penny is also very highly respected by the Blissymbolics Communication Service staff and those in the field of Blissymbolics and non-speech communication and we are indeed excited that she has been appointed its second director.

"REMINISCENCES OF MANY WORKSHOPS"

Lynnette Norris
Penny Parnes
Senior Presentors,
Blissymbolics Communication Institute

For approximately two years, from the fall of 1977 to the fall of 1979, Lynnette Norris and Penny Parnes travelled once a month to communities coast to coast in Canada and to many of the major centres in the United States. Often separately, many times together, presenting Blissymbolics workshops. Our roles at the Blissymbolics Communication Service for the last year and a half, have not allowed us the time to travel and present at these exciting workshops as often as we have in the past.

A name from a past workshop or the mention of a community that we are familiar with, will often send us into reminiscing about the experiences that we had throughout our travels with the BCI. We'd like to share some of these with you.

The people we have presented with, our hosts at workshop settings are far too numerous to mention. However, we hope incidents that we do remember will find many of you laughing along with us in your reminiscences of similar situations.

The policy for accommodation for presentors at out of town workshops was always left to the discretion of the presentors themselves. Sometimes we were offered the hospitality of staying at the home of the host and this was often the most delightful way to spend the four days out of town. We were made tremendoulsy welcome in Valhalla, New York by Ellie and Bill Kaufman. Margaret McQuaig at a workshop in Victoria, found accommodation for herself, Kate Wishart and Lynnette at the home of a friend of hers who was going to be out of town for the period of time during the Blissymbol Elementary Workshop. The three of us agreed to stay in this home to keep the costs for the hosting centre down. As it turned out it was not the wisest decision we made. It was a very small cabin out in the woods. Two of the duties were to feed the chickens and take care of the dog. We were unable to find where to turn the heat on in the cabin and finally managed to light the gas oven which we didn't turn off for four days because it was the only heating in the cabin. I think we had a lot of laughs when we were there over the situation and looking back on it now, it was the closest thing to camping out that I have ever had as a presentor for BCI. Those of you who know Marg McQuaig from Vancouver, know of her wonderful warmth with people and her dedication to the Blissymbolics Communication Institute. Always important to Marg, was to keep the cost of the workshop at the minimum. At a workshop that she hosted in Vancouver, at which Mel Cohen, Sachi Tamura and Lynnette presented, Sachi and Lynnette stayed at Marg's home and Marg made arrangements to set up the third presentor whom she had not met, with a friend of hers that was also an occupational therapist. This female friend of Marg's, who put Mel Cohen up in her home, was a tremendous mother for Mel. She packed his lunch each day, she did his laundry and if my memory serves me right, she even answered the phone for Mel when his wife Susie called. Mel actually has had several amusing incidents in his accommodation arrangements. Being one of the few male presentors for the Institute, Mel gets a variety of females to accompany him on his travels. He and Penny Parnes stayed in a hotel in San Francisco on the up and up in separate rooms. However, when a meeting was taking place in Penny's room, the chamber maid opened the door, looked in and said, "Pardon me, I'll have to get more towels". I'm not too sure who was more embarrased, Penny, Mel or the chamber maid.

Many others have been very kind to us in opening their homes. Penny, Linda Hicks and Ellie Kaufman got a whole floor at the home of Sue and Bob Sansone. This was heated by a wood stove. Being novices to this type of heating, the door was closed to Penny's room (and consequently the heat supply was, too). By morning Penny was sleeping in every article of clothing contained in her suitcase to ward off frostbite.

Very incongruous accommodation was made for Lynnette Norris in Loma Linda, California, a Seventh Day Adventists town which does not allow smoking, alcohol and is a vegetarian community. For someone who enjoys a glass of wine with her steak dinner and a cigarette and coffee after, this was a tremendous hardship.

There have always been the unforeseen incidents in workshops. One workshop in Victoria, in particular that I remember, the room that was set aside for the workshop presentations was a very efficient room with tables and chairs, windows, etc. However, there were no window coverings and after experiencing extreme frustration the first day of the workshop, we managed to get participants to bring in blankets, and heavy towels to cover the windows for the next few days of the workshop.

A workshop held in Buffalo during a freak flash-flooding storm, held other challenges for us. After drawing lots, and Lynnette losing, she went to get the car from an underground parking lot, wading knee-deep through rivers of water only to find the water in the underground parking lot up to the level of the car doors. Besides, Penny effectively argued that knee-deep on Lynnette was waist-deep on Penny.

We travelled through Toronto International Airport so many times that we really began to feel quite familiar with the Custom's procedures. Our usual time of travel was not 7:30a.m., however, one Saturday morning found Penny at the airport on her way to a workshop in California. The hour of the morning was not the best for either Penny or the Custom's official. The questions that he asked, she had no answers for - how many feet were on the videos, how many feet were on the films, the exact number of slides in our presentations. As Penny saw the time drawing closer for her plane to leave she became totally frustrated and, resorting to her feminine charms, at the last minute burst into tears. This was too much for the Custom's official to handle and he allowed Penny and her luggage to pass through.

There was a workshop in South Dakota shortly after the unfortunate incident of the DC-10 crash in Chicago. Lynnette Norris and Sachi Tamura were to present this workshop. As it was, SAchi was booked to fly directly from Seattle to the community in South Dakota. Sachi discovered when she arrived in Seattle that she was indeed booked on a DC-10 which had been taken out of commission and she was re-routed. In order to be re-routed and arrive in South Dakota in time for the workshop, she flew literally across the United States and back again to South Dakota. Her flight had seen her land and take off, ten times. When she arrived at 1:00a.m. without luggage, she was certainly a very unhappy presentor. Her luggage did arrive though - the last day of the workshop!

There was also the unforeseen when Mr. Bliss arrived unexpectedly at an elementary workshop in Vancouver during the system presentation when Lynnette was about to begin to explain Mr. Bliss' rationale for "big and little meanings". Saved by the creator! We broke from session to meet with Mr. Bliss, to introduce him to participants and he agreed at that time to come back the next day to the workshop and explain this unique concept of big and little meaning to the participants.

There were always tremendous kindnesses shown to us in our travels and at home. The Ontario Crippled Children's Centre staff are always very gracious to our workshop participants and we thank them for this. Many people have opened their homes to us for a homecooked meal which is always a tremendous bonus when we are travelling and eating hotel food. Thanks to Sachi Tamura in Victoria, B.C., to Sally Ruggia in Texas, to Susie Cohen in Loma Linda, California and to many others across the continent who have been so gracious to us. Thanks to Barb Cox in Halifax for lending us her car so that we could hit Peggy's Cove for a lobster breakfast before the workshop started. Unfortunately we had to travel very quickly there and back and did pick up a speeding ticket from the Nova Scotia police.

Thanks to Marg McQuaig for always sharing her home with the presentors, even if Marg was not presenting at an elementary workshop her home was always key base for us when we were out in the west. Thanks to Laurie Wadell and her friends of Bliss in Halifax for entertaining us always so royally at a wine and cheese party. To Sister Gertrude in Prince Edward Island who drove Lynnette to Cavendish Beach during a blizzard in December to give her a glimps of this popular tourist resort so that she could say "I've been there". To Kate and Gavin Wishart who gave up a Sunday and treated Lynnette to brunch at the top of Grouse Mountain. Thanks to Ginette Schneider from Sudbury who was most accommodating to Sachi and Lynnette's schedule by taking them to see the slag pouring at midnight in Sudbury!

And then there were always amusing incidents which perhaps seem funnier over the years and perhaps have become a little exagerated, but we would like to share some of these with you.

There was the trip on the Dartmouth Ferry that Penny, Caroline Price and Lynnette made at the end of a very long day at a Blissymbol workshop in Halifax that ended at 9:00 o'clock at night. We decided the best way to get some fresh air was to take the Dartmouth Ferry, to be able to say that "we had done that too", we found ourselves on the Ferry with one other traveller, a drunk who managed to proposition each of us individually in the time that it took to go from Halifax to Dartmouth.

There was a drive from Detroit to Pontiac, Michigan (normally a 45 minute drive) that took 4½ hours on a shuttle bus. By the end of our drive, we were sitting in the back of the bus, singing camp songs and really resigning ourselves to the fact that we might never reach our destination. When we finally did make our destination, the first stop we wanted to make was in the bar. As we walked into this dimly lit, rather formal room, in our jeans, we were seated side by side at a table for two, the waiter coming by ready to take the order, asked Lynnette first what she would like and then turned to Penny and said "And for the lady?" Short hair and a jean jacket obviously did not show the best feminine qualities!

There were a group of people at a workshop that we did in New York City after picking us up at the airport in our jeans and our ruffled appearance commented to us on our drive to the community, that had they known that there were "real people" coming to do this workshop that they might have made arrangements to get some theatre tickets or to take us on the town.

Many people expressed the opinion that they were really expecting slick professionals from an organization accommodating the top ten floors of a Toronto high-rise building. Greeting two "grubbies" in jeans was not what most people expected to find when they came to meet us at the airport.

Doing workshops as regularly as we had in the past gave us more polish than we seem to find ourselves with these days. The last instance Penny had of making a presentation of fair importance in her own area of metropolitan Toronto, found her late in arriving at the session because she was on the freeway and did not know how to get herself off and to the hotel. Her partner, Shirley McNaughton was to meet her at the hotel. Shirley had arrived on time only to wait for Penny 15 minutes past the scheduled time. When checking the time in her diary, Shirley found that she indeed was at the wrong hotel herself. Finally both made it to the right hotel, but both were rather frazzled at their arrival.

Most workshops had something memorable about them. Something exciting that happened, something disastrous that took place, someone in particular that showed a special kindness. The last workshop, however, that Shirly McNaughton did, seemed to sum up the kind of unexpected that can happen at a workshop that anyone does anywhere. At a recent workshop in Thunder Bay, Ontario, in order to make a particularly strong point, while using an overhead projector, Shirley brought her finger down onto the equipment for emphasis and to exaggerate this emphasis next brought her fist down. As her fist hit the machine, the machine shattered and so began the first day of a Blissymbolics Elementary Workshop!

"THE BLISSYMBOLICS COMMUNICATION SERVICE EVALUATION KIT"

Nora Rothschild
BCS Consultant

Barb Collier
BCS Consultant

Marny Loach
BCS Instructor

This kit was designed as an evaluation tool for use by clinicians experienced in Blissymbolics assessment and programming procedures. Its design lends itself to be used with a wide population of non-speaking children and is seen as a diagnostic tool which aids in establishing a starting point for programming and in indicating appropriate teaching strategies.

As all the clients seen at the Blissymbolics Communication Service are, of necessity, previously assessed by other professionals for appropriateness of Blissymbolics, our assessment procedure serves to confirm this recommendation, to supplement previous assessments and to initiate the programme. Because of the range in age, physical ability, cognitive and language levels, etc. seen at the Blissymbolics Communication Service, this kit serves in providing materials for evaluating some requisite areas for symbol use with a wide range of population.

The "evaluation kit" was designed as an informal assessment tool for use by the Blissymbolics Communication Service: it is non-standardized and is still undergoing modifications. The kit is portable, compact and affords a versatility in its application. It can be adapted to each individual child according to his attention span, his interests, physical abilities, cognitive level, etc.

It is mainly for these reasons that all the items used are distinct stimuli so that they can be easily manipulated and re-organized to suit the needs of the child in question, whether it be necessary to display the materials on a flat, vertical or tilted surface.

The Blissymbol instructor has a set of predetermined goals for the evaluation procedure; however, at the Blissymbolics Communication Service we make every attempt to incorporate these specific tasks into meaningful situations during the session according to the client's interests and needs.

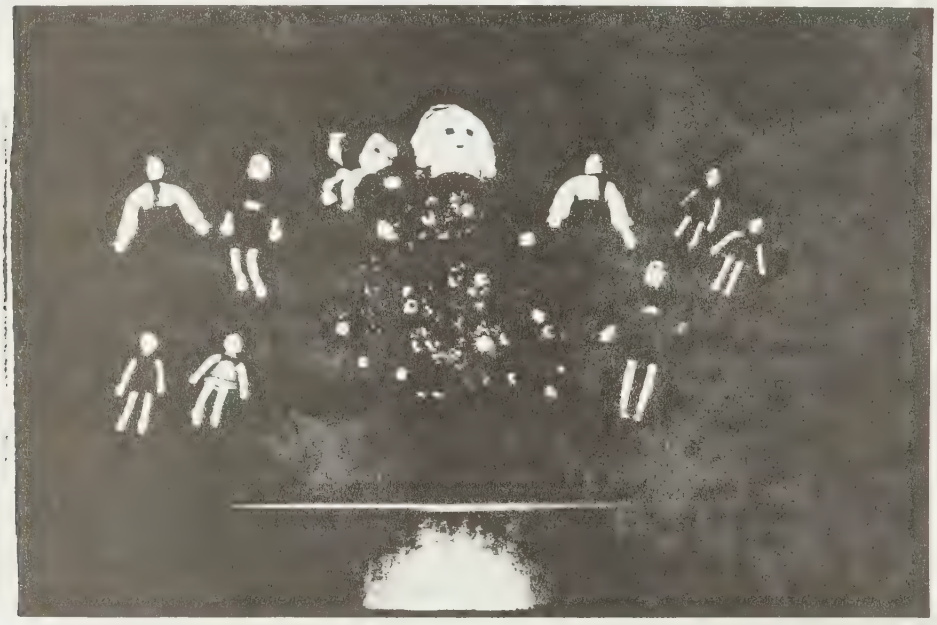
There is no set list of questions, guidelines or forms to fill out and the nature of the materials is such as to allow maximum flexibility so that although similar information can be elicited, no two evaluations will be identical in length, content or order. Thus, it is up to the clinician to act as a director to elicit from the child's activities certain aspects which he/she wishes to evaluate.

During the evaluation process, the child's receptive and expressive abilities are observed, in addition to other areas such as the level of play activity, symbolic functioning, social interaction, etc. Specifically, the clinician is looking at how the child relates to symbols, the interest he shows in them, the speed of learning, retention skills and his ability to interpret the more pictographic symbols.

Contents of Evalution Kit

I. There are two boxes containing toys and common objects that are representations of real objects used for the assessment of receptive and expressive language abilities, matching of objects to other objects, pictures or symbols, physical functioning, categorization skills according to size, color, shape, function, etc. These toys and objects can be easily manipulated to create a relaxed play situation. Objects include various sizes and colors of toothbrushes, hairbrushes, toy farm animals, crayons, cups, spoons, balls, blocks, cars, etc.

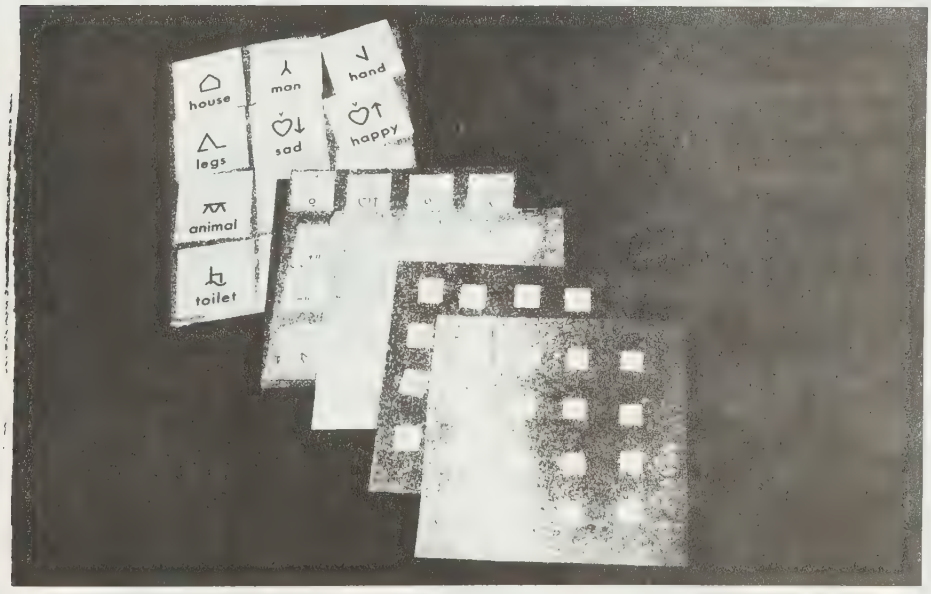
II. The two families of dolls within the kit spark great interest with the young children, making it easy to assess their knowledge of names of family members, pronouns, verbs, receptive and expressive language abilities and use of specific syntactical forms.



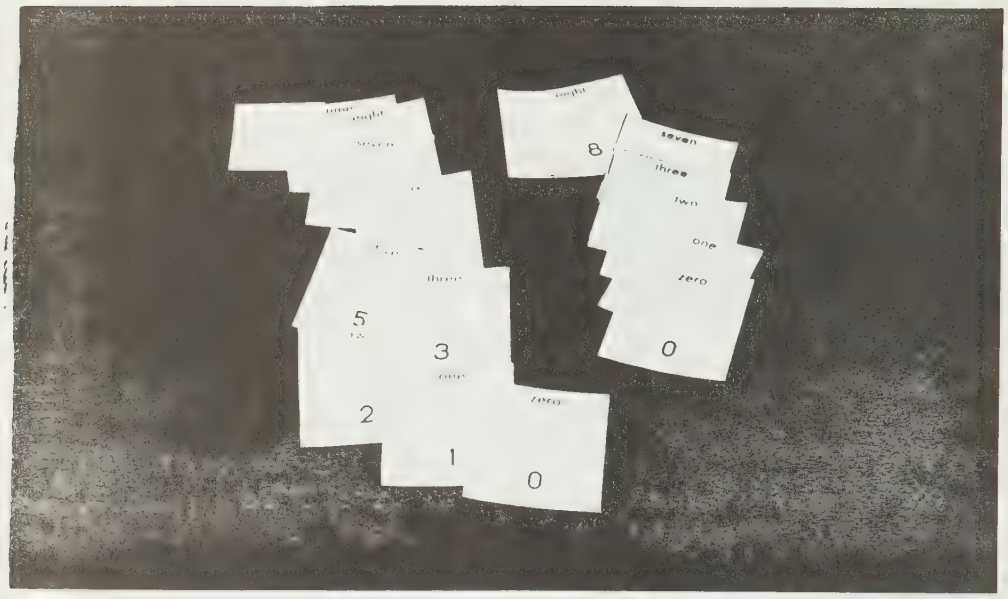
III. This section includes a variety of large colour photographs with matching flashcard symbols used to assess comprehension, pointing abilities, cognitive and perceptual skills and the speed of acquisition of symbols.

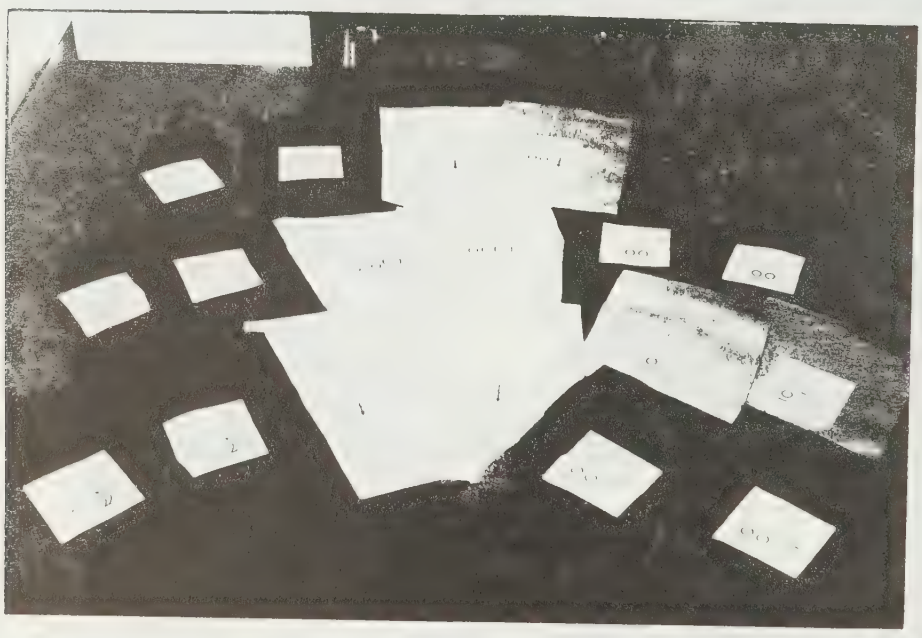
IV. There are two sets of fifty BCI flashcards. These 50 flashcards were chosen from the complete set of 248 symbols mainly to facilitate ease of handling and organization. The fifty flashcards include some functional symbols, including some pictographic as well as some ideographic symbols. The symbols chosen include at least several symbols from each of the grammatical categories.

V. There are seven different sizes of symbols, sixteen in each set which have been chosen specifically to assess fine and gross visual discrimination abilities. Each symbol may be presented individually or in whatever combinations the clinician chooses in order to assess appropriate symbol size and borders. The seven sizes vary from the 9/16" BCI stamps to a 3" square size.



VI. The assessment of the knowledge of colours and numbers is necessary if the
VII. child needs a special colour or number-coded display. The number cards used herein are taken from the BCI flashcard series. Colours are assessed by using large cloth squares of nine different colours. Two cloth squares of each colour are provided so that matching abilities as well as receptive and expressive abilities can be evaluated. In addition, the colour symbols are removable (by use of velcro tabs) thus offering the clinician the option of teaching these symbols.





This evaluation kit has been in use for several months at the Blissymbolics Communication Service. The format has proven to be successful although the kit is not yet considered complete. Any suggestions would be welcomed. For further information, please contact Nora Rothschild at the Blissymbolics Communication Service.

Penny Parnes
Director,
Blissymbolics Communication Service

NON-SPEECH COMMUNICATION CONFERENCE

November 17-19, 1980

The non-speech conference held in Toronto in November was definitely THE event of the Fall. Over 500 people gathered for 2 days plus 2 evenings for a most interesting and stimulating experience. Speakers were from a wide variety of backgrounds and attempted to give perspectives on the following areas: Overview of Communication; Assessment; Visual Communication Systems including word and picture boards, Blissymbolics and the Rebus System; Manual Communication systems including Amerind gestural code, Ameslan and total communication; the Use of Technology; and Applications of Non-Speech Systems to Various Populations. As if this wasn't enough, the conference also encompassed a wine and cheese party and a "lunch and learn" session which allowed participants and speakers to interact on an informal basis.

Speakers included such "dignitaries" as: David Yoder, Madison, Wisconsin; Eugene McDonald, State College, Pennsylvania; Shirley McNaughton, Toronto, Ontario; Howard Shane, Boston, Massachusettes; Gregg Vanderheiden, Madison, Wisconsin; Donald Moores, Washington, D.C., etc. etc., etc... The conference was co-sponsored by the BCI and by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. All those on the planning committee were so excited regarding the response to and evaluation of the conference, that plans are underway for another conference to be held in 1982. Joining BCI and OISE as a sponsor of the conference will be the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre. For details on the 1982 conference (probably to be held in November) watch the Bulletin.

All in all a most exciting event for all concerned and a great feeling to see just how large and sophisticated our field is becoming while still remaining so personal and concerned with the non-speaking individual.

"ALTERNATE COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS COURSE IN U.K."

Shirley McNaughton
Director of Professional Services
BCI

Last October, following the annual international meeting of Blissymbolics Communication Centres in Cardiff, the timing was right for me to spend a week's holiday in the perfect way for a non-communication addict! I attended the Alternative Communication Systems Course held at Castle Priory, Wallingford, England.

Castle Priory is a lovely Georgian mansion which is operated as a training centre by the British Spastics Society. It is situated on the Thames River, two short blocks from the main street of Wallingford - a town which presents to the North American, all the delights of a small English community.

Nearly every week, Castle Priory is booked for courses related to the treatment and care of the physically disabled and other groups with special needs. Everything is done to facilitate learning within a pleasant, informal, sociable setting and the schedule is planned to allow time for exploring Wallingford.

For Jinny Storr, BCI symbol officer, and myself, the week had an added dimension. We were housed in a separate wing of Castle Priory along with Kirsten Lorstrom and Britt Carlsson of the Blissymbolics Nordic Committee. At the end of each day, following an envigorating walk and dinner and post-dinner conversations with course members, we were able to relax with Britt and Kirsten, reviewing the day's lectures and discussions and sharing perceptions and experiences.

The course included sessions conducted by leading spokespersons for the non-speech languages and programmes currently used in Great Britain:

British Sign Language - Mrs. Brenda Sutcliffe
British Signs Supporting English - Mrs. Brenda Sutcliffe
Makaton Vocabulary - Mrs. Margaret Walker
Paget Gorman Sign System - Miss Marjorie Philpott
Cued Speech - Mrs. June Dixon
Amerind - Mrs. Suzanne Leavesley
Blissymbolics - Mrs. Ena Davies
Mrs. Shirley McNaughton

The course was introduced by Dr. Kenneth Holt, Director of the Wolfson Centre, London and coordinated by Clare Latham, speech pathologist at the Wolfson Centre and Blissymbolics presentor for the U.K. Communication Centre. Ena Davies shared her afternoon on Blissymbolics with me, giving me the opportunity of presenting the state of the art from a BCI Toronto perspective.

It was a very exciting week! Participants and speakers had the opportunity, within a small group, to explore and compare seven different systems. My only criticism was the one with which we are always faced - too much information in too little time!

We returned to Canada, filled with admiration for the very capable way in which the course was organized and presented and ready for our North American look at alternate systems through the Non-Speech Conference co-sponsored by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) of the University of Toronto and the Blissymbolics Communication Institute. Interesting that the two systems which were included in both agendas were Blissymbolics and Amerind!

I have compiled an information source list containing the addresses for obtaining information regarding many of the communication systems and programmes taught in Great Britain. Copies can be obtained by writing to me at the Blissymbolics Communication Institute.

Information regarding attending courses which are scheduled at Castle Priory and the booking of Castle Priory for hosting training courses is available from Ray Jonson, Senior Tutor, Castle Priory.

A wonderful way to spend a holiday!

Ann Colquhoun
Conn Smythe Research Project

Research in Progress - "Evaluation of the Blissymbol Printer, the Blissymbol Terminal and the Apple Personal Computer".

The Conn Smythe Research Foundation has funded a research study to evaluate two communication aids which have recently become available for use within Blissymbols, and to explore the uses of the Apple computer with software for Blissymbols. The Blissymbol Printer, an Autocom modified by the Trace Center, has 800 symbols and records the user's message on a paper tape. The Blissymbol terminal, which was developed by Norpak Ltd., stores a vocabulary of 512 symbols. The symbols are displayed on a television screen in groups of up to 24 symbols, and a message of up to thirty symbols can be stored for later viewing. The Blissymbol terminal also allows communication over a telephone line to another Blissymbol terminal.

The evaluation of the Blissymbol terminal and the Blissymbol printer is two years in length, ending in August 1981. There are four time periods and different students participate during each period. Three terminals and one printer are available for the evaluation.

The function of these aids in different residential and educational settings is being explored. The terminal will have been in an institution, a home, a Participation House (we hope), a summer camp, a special education class and a Blissymbol class over the time of the study. The printer has been in an institutional setting, a home, and a special education class and a summer cottage and will be in two more homes and two different special education classes.

The participants involved in the study range in age from ten years to twenty-seven years. There is a variety of degree of mobility and sophistication in symbol usage among the participants.

As with any new machine that has not yet been field tested, we experienced a number of technical difficulties with both aids in the beginning. In spite of these initial problems, we will still have a lot of useful information to report about the terminal and the printer and to include in the teaching manual which will be produced at the end of the study. Besides the regular day-to-day use of the aids both in school and at home, the printer has been to the Rehabilitation International conference in Winnipeg last June and to a family's summer cottage and the terminal was used by one student at Blue Mountain Camp. We will be able to report on the usefulness and drawbacks of a technical aid such as the Blissymbol terminal and the Blissymbol printer in these special types of settings.

The evaluation of the Apple computer with software for Blissymbols involves several students who will use the Apple for different purposes: recreational; educational; vocational communication. The students receive instruction in the uses and manipulation of the computer and their difficulties and progress is noted.

Three students are currently involved in this part of the study. One student is working on a coding system which will give her access to all 1400 Blissymbols which are stored on a disk for the Apple (they are presently coded by number, in a symbol/alphabetical order). After that she will develop her own vocabulary displays which can be stored on a spearate disk for her own uses.

The second student has a specially designed interface which in effect duplicates the Apple keyboard. The interface is activated in a similar way to an autocom. This allows entirely independent use of the computer. This student will be looking at the vocational possibilities of the computer.

The third student is learning to write simple computer programs and will move on from there.

In the fall of 1981, we will have completed a booklet discussing the advantages and disadvantages of each of these aids, and their capabilities and limitations as demonstrated during our study. In the booklet, we will present suggestions and tactics for teaching which have been found to be successful by the instructors who have been involved in the study. The booklet will also include information concerning how well each of these technical aids fits into different educational programs and will describe some of the effects upon students which might occur as a result of using either the Blissymbol printer, the Blissymbol terminal or the Apple computer.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Greater Victoria Society for Alternative Communication, #420-620 View Street, Victoria, B.C., has openings for a Blissymbolics instructor and Language Pathologist. Those interested should telephone the Director immediately at 604-383-1624

Instructor:
- to plan objectives and carry out a programme to develop alternative communication skills with clients
- to keep records of clients' progress
- to act as consultant to families and institutions
- to prepare symbol boards and other materials as needed
- to work in a variety of settings, schools, hospitals and homes
- to be prepared to work some evenings

Salary commensurate with experience

Language Pathologist:
- to provide speech and language assessments and therapy including explaining alternative methods of communication - i.e. Blissymbolics, sign language and technical aids.
- use of standardized measures, informal assessment procedures and environmental observations
- provide inservice training to programme, group homes, and institution staff and parents
- assist with coordination of the programme

Salary - $20,000 +

THE BREAKTHROUGH

Produced by Lauron Productions Ltd.

40 min. colour 16mm - $600.00 Rental - $70.00

It is hard to imagine anything more cruel to a human being than living with a healthy mind trapped inside a body which cannot speak or communicate in any meaningful way. Yet that is the plight many cerebral palsied people have suffered throughout history. Shunned and avoided by society, they have been denied the most basic emotional need, that of contact and communication with other human beings.

Now, using a pictographic symbol language invented by Charles Bliss and inspired by his experiences in a concentration camp during World War II, people with cerebral palsy who cannot speak are beginning to break the barriers of their disability and the negative attitudes of society towards them.

THE BREAKTHROUGH looks at three such people:

Wendy Ferguson, is 11 and learning to communicate with the help and support of her family.

Paul Marshall, is an 18 year old coping with his first days at a regular high school. He feels it is important to become integrated with able bodied people his own age.

Sue Odell, a widow in her late twenties, faces life alone in a hospital that restricts her from leading a full life. She is a fluent Blissymbol user and is contributing to the work of expanding the language.

THE BREAKTHROUGH is their story and it has been made in tribute to the United Nations International Year of Disabled Persons.

THE BREAKTHROUGH can be used in PUBLIC SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL, COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY and SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS. Language Studies, Linguistics, Special Education, Social Services, Early Childhood Education.

Professional In-Service Programming

SALE/RENTAL/PREVIEW INFORMATION CONTACT:

Kathleen Shea
CINEMA CONCEPTS INTERNATIONAL 93 Scollard Street, Toronto, Ontario M5R 1G4

(416) 967-6503 Telex 06-218164

THE BREAKTHROUGH

THE BREAKTHROUGH

WENDY FERGUSON is 11 years old. Cerebral palsy has left her unable to speak and confined to a wheelchair. Her family has always had to guess what Wendy wanted to say. When Wendy started to learn Blissymbolics her family looked forward to being able to communicate fully with her for the first time. Learning Blissymbolics is a long and demanding process for both Wendy and her teacher. Wendy suffers painful spasms, as frequently as every fifteen seconds. The spasms can hamper her learning, but not as much as the powerful drugs that would curtail them. With the help, support and love of her family Wendy has begun to share her thoughts and feelings.

PAUL MARSHALL is an 18 year old with a lively mind and many interests. He enjoys working his ham radio and driving around his parent's farm on their tractor. But because he has cerebral palsy and cannot speak Paul has never attended a regular high school full time. When Paul decided to attend high school it was a turning point in his life. He feels it is important to become integrated with able bodied people his own age, but he does not know how readily they will accept him. If this experiment fails Paul would return to Special Education and would find it more difficult to become qualified for a profession. THE BREAKTHROUGH follows Paul at this crucial point in his quest for independence.

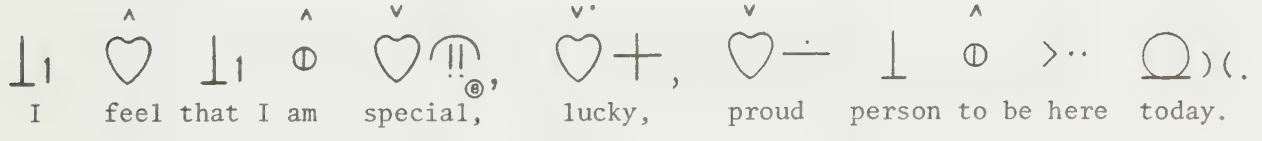
SUE ODELL is a widow in her twenties. She is confined to a wheelchair, can not speak and has spent her life in institutions. She is one of the most sophisticated and fluent Blissymbol users in the world and consults professionally in expanding the language. For eighteen months, until his death, Sue was married to Art Odell, who also had cerebral palsy. She looks back on her marriage as the happiest time in her life. Apart from occasional visits from friends and her work with Blissymbols, Sue feels her life in a residential hospital to be severely restricted. As she herself says, "I am not sick, so why should I live in a hospital?"

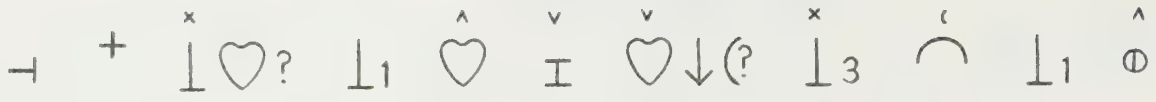
SYMBOL USERS' CORNER

Penny Parnes
Director,
Blissymbolics Communication Service

The following is an address given to a volunteer group by Mrs. Susan Odell. Sue has been a symbol user for many years and I feel her "output" speaks eloquently for her ability to communicate using Blissymbols. Sue is now a staff member of the Blissymbolics Communication Service on a part-time basis.

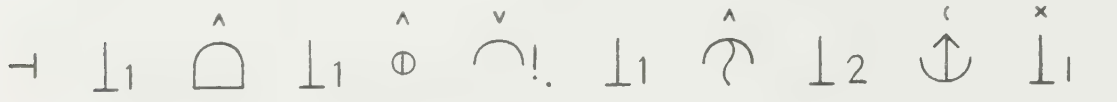
Susan Odell
Blissymbolics Communication Service





but with strangers I feel a little afraid that they think that I am

"mentally retarded" because I cannot speak and my body has C.P.



but I know I am smart. I wish that you would give us

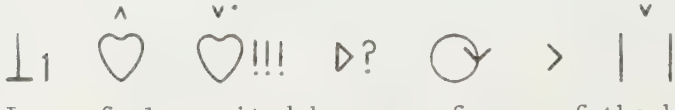
at least an hour so that I could prove that I am bright.

Please don't look at the external body but look inside

the soul for the true person. I hope in the coming year

people will learn how necessary it is to learn non-speaking people

are not different from themselves.



I feel excited because of year of the handicapped.

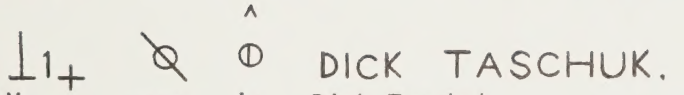
Hello -

Here is a letter written in Bliss by Dick Taschuk. We have been reading the letters in the Newsletter and Dick decided he would like to write one too. He would be most interested in havinga pen pal or anyone who would like to respond to his letter of introduction.

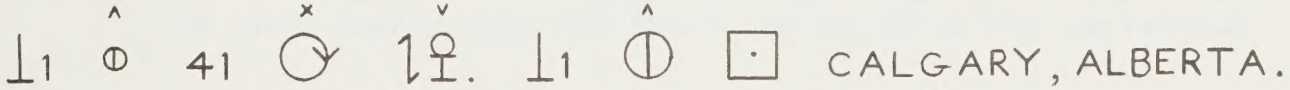
Dick may be leaving us soon to take up residence in Edmonton so please address any letters to him c/o Joyce Gallinger, P.M.T.U., V.R.R.I., Calgary, Alberta. They will be sent on to him immediately.

Joyce Gallinger

News from Calgary



My name is Dick Taschuk.

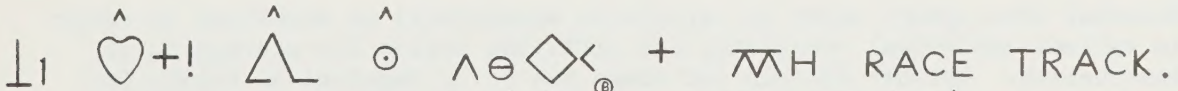


I am 41 years old. I live in Calgary, Alberta.

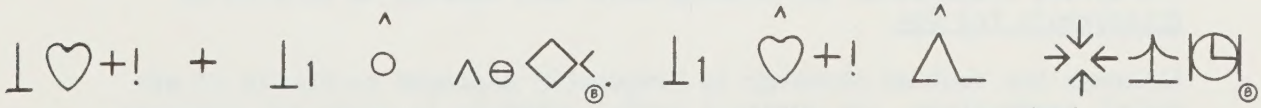
I go V.R.R.I. to work. Joyce is Blissymbol teacher in

P.M.T.U.

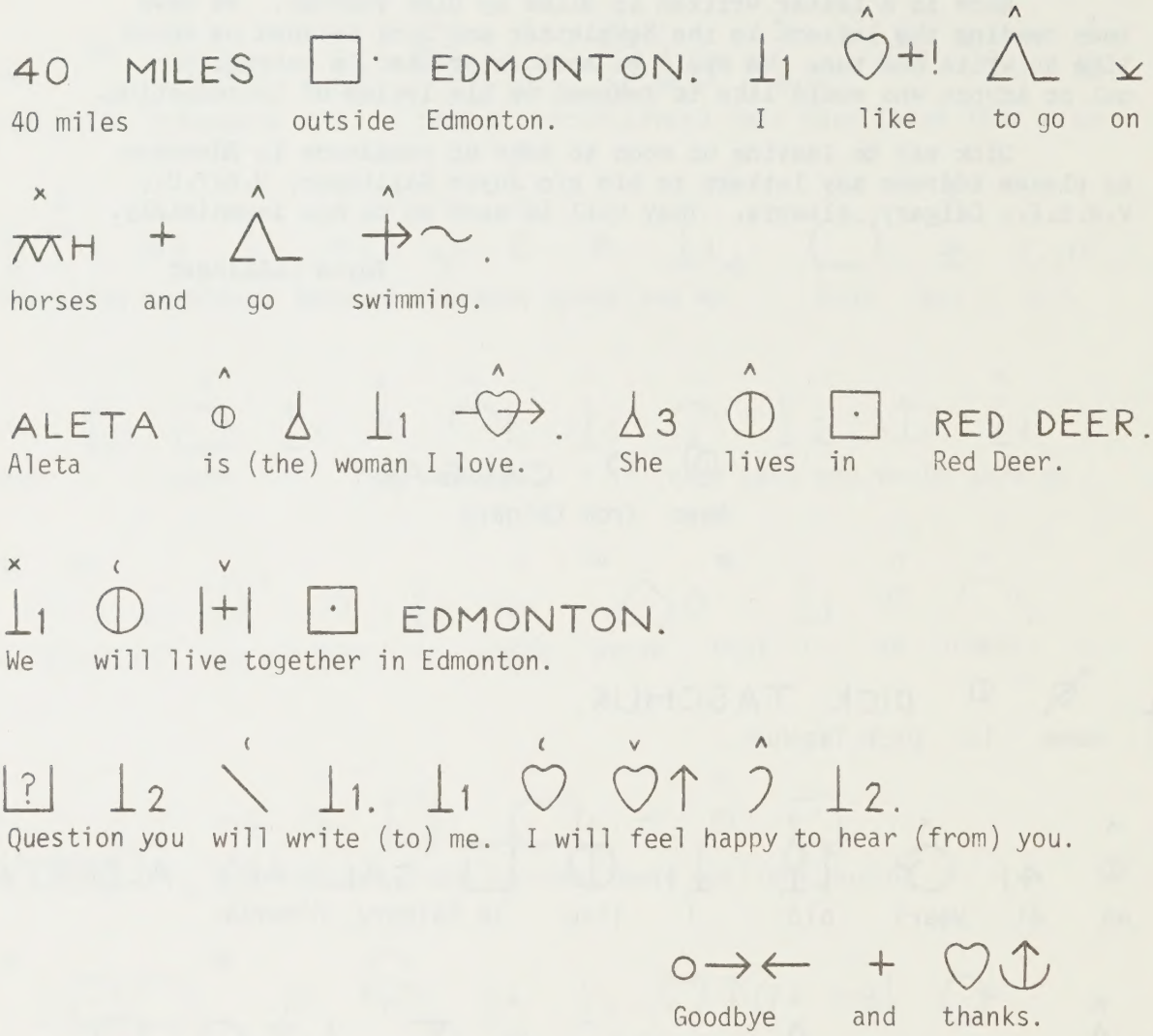
P.M.T.U.



I like to go to see baseball ® and horse race track.



Friend and I talk baseball. I like to go (to) camp ®



(B) indicates - 1) a symbol which differs from the C. K. Bliss version either in symbol form or accompanying wording , or - 2) a new BCI symbol authorized in the absence of requested comment from C. K. Bliss.

Material from symbol users is reproduced essentially as submitted in order to reflect individual creativity and different styles for expression or instruction. Neither symbols nor usage are to be regarded as models for expression or instruction.

The symbol composition and drawing have been updated to conform to Blissymbols for Use.

Although the combine strategy is frequently employed to arrive at new symbol expressions, the personal symbol creation is often not enclosed between combine indicators as required by BCI practice.